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A B C

D E

FEATURES OF LAUAN LIFE: *A*, LAUAN WITH DIGGING STICK FOR PLANTING TARO; *B*, FIJIAN BOYS WITH YAMS (KELI USU); *C*, WOMEN DRESSED FOR LAKALAKA DANCE; *D*, VILLAGE GREEN, TUMBOU; *E*, GRAVE OF TUI MOALA AT NAROI.

[End Plate 2]

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929
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Lakemba

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

yaka wood with hinges and corners of plated silver. The coffin had been imported from Suva prior to the death of the chief, who had been ill for some time. The deceased had been dressed by near relatives in a shirt, a coat, and a kilt of Tongan tapa. The head was bare. Informants said that formerly a whale's tooth was buried with the body, but on this occasion none had been placed in the coffin.

The interior of the chief's house consisted of two rooms separated by a wooden partition. The coffin lay in the middle of the inner room on a wooden dias, 45 meters high, covered with fine mats. The floor of the room was covered with fine mats and barkcloth, and the walls and ceiling were festooned with Fijian tapa.

On the thresholds of the two doorways on the windward side of the room, fires of sandalwood burned continuously from the death to the burial. Because of the scarcity of sandalwood in Lau the wood for this purpose had been collected for years and stored in the chief's house. The fires were attended by near female relatives of the deceased, who frequently scattered powdered sandalwood about the coffin. The fragrance of sandalwood permeated the room and obliterated the odor from the corpse, which was not preserved in any way.

The walls and ceiling of the outer room were draped with long strips of Fijian tapa. Five long pieces of tapa lay in elongated, puffy piles on the floor. At the lower end of the room near the main entrance sat four women called fanners (*iri iri*). Each held a fan (*iri*) in the right hand and fanned with short, quick, rhythmic movements which, by means of a turn of the wrist, described a semicircular arc in the air. The women worked in shifts so that the fanning was continuous from death to burial.

At night a group of female relatives, called the *tonitoni*, kept watch over the body. Natives say that the purpose of the *tonitoni* is to keep away evil spirits. Women of the nobility watched in the inner room and those of the lower class in the outer room. Outside the house was brilliantly lighted with lamps placed at intervals along the walls.

The older male relatives of the deceased (*koira na tonitoni* or *mbota*) sat in the kava house (*vale ni yanggona*), a temporary pavilion erected near the chief's house, drinking kava day and night. Women were present in the kava circle, but middle-aged men mixed the kava by the Tongan method. The root was pounded in a wooden mortar with an iron pestle and mixed in a wooden bowl with legs which was made on Kambara. The ceremonial kava drinking continued until the tenth day after the burial when a feast called *i vaka mbongi tchini* was held. Relatives who were absent from the kava circle were fined small quantities of kava. The crowd smoked and told jokes and amusing stories, and whenever it became too noisy every member was fined a handful of kava and tobacco.

As the funeral day drew near, groups of mourners began to arrive from Lau, and even from Mbau and other parts of Fiji. As each group arrived it presented property (*i yau ni rengarenggu*), consisting of whales' teeth, mats, and tapa in a house (the Vale Vou) in the chief's compound. The mats were carried and presented in rolls, the tapa in long, outstretched pieces, and the whales' teeth in clusters of six to ten. The gifts were received by the herald of the deceased, a man of Tanggalevu, Tumbou. Kava, made by noble women, was drunk. The root was pounded with a stone pounder on a flat stone. After the presentation ceremony the property was taken to the chief's house.

The funeral (*na veimbulu vaka turanga*) was held on the day after I arrived. A cement vault, 3 meters long, 1 meter wide, and 3.5 meters deep, had been prepared in the chief's burial mound, called Vakanitawake, in Tumbou. The burial mound was rectangular in shape and 3 meters high. One broad side was stepped. The vault was lined with mats ornamented with bright wool borders, and the mound was fenced with tapa and wreaths. Women mourners carried long, outstretched pieces of Tongan barkcloth and placed them on the ground to carpet a path from the door of the chief's chamber to the tomb. They seated themselves about 2 meters apart on either side of the path and bowed their heads (pl. 1, *A*).

Over the tapa carpet moved the funeral procession. The bier was carried on mats by 20 men. It was followed by colonial officials from Suva including the Governor of the

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distributed. The sauce is sweetened with sugar cane, ti, or imported sugar. 252
Stalks of sugar cane are ground on a sharp piece of coral called *i thoronga* and strained with a hibiscus strainer. The juice is placed in a large pot and [412] ●
stirred over the fire with a paddle-shaped stick called *i yali*, made for the occasion out of the lower end of a coconut-leaf midrib. The resulting caramel mixture is called *salasalaki*. Coconut cream (*lolo*) is added slowly to the *salasalaki* and the whole is boiled. The sauce is called *loloriri*.

To make manioc pudding (*mavu*) roots of the poisonous varieties are first made into *tapioke solo* (p. 153). Roots of nonpoisonous varieties are scraped and boiled. The cooked manioc is placed in a long oblong wooden bowl. Two boys, one sitting at each end of the bowl, hold it between their legs, while two young men, one standing on each side of the bowl, pound the mass with pounders (*i mbutu ni nggalu*) made from the lower end of the midrib of a coconut leaf. The pounding is done rapidly and in rhythm, first one lifting and lowering his pounder and then the other. Every three or four minutes fresh men replace the pair who are pounding. The two holding the bowl are replaced less frequently. The pounding continues for about 20 minutes. An older man then sprinkles some sauce over the mass and mixes it by hand. Then he takes some of the pudding in each hand and squeezes each handful quickly into three balls (*nggelena* or *nggele ni nggalu*), which fall into one corner of the bowl. When he has about 15 balls he sprinkles some sauce on a scorched, folded banana leaf (on which the midrib has been trimmed), places the balls on the leaf, and adds more sauce. Another man pleats the leaf into a bag and ties it. A bag of pudding is called *i thovo nggalu*. *Mavu* is also made of roasted breadfruit or of boiled or steamed taro.

Puddings without sauce are made of manioc, sweet potato, Tahitian chestnut, banana, taro, and *yambia*. Some pudding recipes follow:

Malimali. Peeled ripe bananas are pounded by hand in a wooden bowl. Dry *yambia* starch and the milk of green coconuts is added. The mass is mixed and divided into portions, each portion is wrapped in a scorched banana leaf, then in breadfruit or ti leaves and steamed.

Vakalolo vunitchi (banana pudding). Coconut cream is added to peeled, ripe, pounded bananas. The mixture is divided into portions, which are wrapped in banana leaves and steamed.

Vovo. Green bananas are boiled, peeled, and pounded. Grated coconut is added and the pudding is ready to eat.

Tololo. A mixture is prepared as for *tapioke solo*. Before steaming, coconut cream and grated coconut are added.

Tahitian chestnut pudding. Grated Tahitian chestnuts, grated coconut, and coconut cream are mixed and divided into portions which are wrapped in ti leaves and steamed.

Preserving

Fermented food (*mandrai*) is especially important on Fulanga, where any 251
surplus of food is preserved for times of scarcity. Manioc imported from

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502 however, be the orientation of a canoe if the outrigger were on the port side, the usual position in Lau.

For further details concerning *thamakathu*, called *thamakau* in Mbauan, see Hornell (16, pp. 307-319).

Construction

396 The construction of a large sailing canoe requires planned economy on the part of the builder and his clan and the cooperative labor of his whole village. It extends over a period of several months. The builder and his clan must raise enough food to provide daily feasts for the workers and gather enough property to make the final payment to the carpenter.

396 313 [824] **Canoe body.** The builder selects a tree for the hull of greenheart, *mbau*, or *makota (Dysoxylum richii)* wood. Canoes of greenheart are the strongest and the most durable. The trunk must be straight, large, and sound, and it must not be too far from the beach and the village. A sailor is always looking for good canoe timber and often stops on a trip through the jungle to examine a tree. Standing at the base and facing the tree, he sights up to the crown to determine the curve of the trunk and its suitability for a hull.

● [412] When the tree has been marked by cutting off a piece of bark with a knife, the builder procures the services of a carpenter, usually from his own village. If he is an influential man, he makes an initial payment of property (*mbutombuto ni wangga*) to the carpenter before the work begins. Formerly a builder from another Lau island or from Tonga made an initial payment of at least two whales' teeth.

396 313 483 [412] When sufficient food for the first series of feasts has been collected, a day is set for felling the tree. Early in the morning the men of the village go to fell the tree. Under supervision of the carpenter the tree is felled close to the ground by means of metal-bladed adzes. Before the crown is cut out wooden rollers are shoved under the trunk. A feast prepared in a temporary earth oven in the jungle is provided by the builder and his clan at about midday. The men meet again on an appointed day to continue the work. With great effort the trunk is rolled over into the position the finished canoe is to take. Two strong saplings, about 3 meters long, are staked near the middle and athwart the trunk on the side from which it is to be rolled. The stakes are lashed to the log with *wangiri* and split *viavia* vines. Wedges of wood are then forced between the log and the stakes to make the vines taut. [824] Two *kandrangi (Smilax vitiensis)* vines are tied near the base end of the trunk and one near the head. All the men except the builder take hold of these vines and prepare to pull. The builder, grasping the roller under the base of the trunk, cries rhythmically, "Folo, folo, folo, folo! I tuo!" At the last two words the men pull, the builder raises the roller, and the trunk rolls over.

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lighter, and less finished than sailing canoes. They are built quickly without ceremony unless the owner wishes to have a small race (*rova*) at the launching.

There are two types of paddling canoes in Lau, the *velovelo* and the *wangga vothe*. The single dugout type called *velovelo* is not often seen. It is more suited to river than to lagoon use. One at Undu, Kambara, consisted of a dugout of *makota* about 6 meters long cut according to the usual canoe hull pattern. It had low washstrakes resembling stringers, 3 primary and 2 secondary booms crossed by 4 stringers, and a short float joined to the booms by 6 pairs of stick connectives, 2 pairs to each primary boom. This type of canoe is used on the rivers of Viti Levu and called *takia*, according to Hornell (16, pp. 304-306).

The built-up dugout type of paddling canoe, called *wangga vothe*, is common in Lau. One in use on Fulanga consisted of a dugout of *makota* 5.75 meters long, washstrakes 15 cm. high, 3 booms, 3 stringers, and a float joined as in the *velovelo*. This type of canoe is called *wangga vakatau* on Viti Levu, according to Hornell (16, pp. 306-307).

DOUBLE CANOES

Sauthoko

The construction of a large, double canoe of the type called *sauthoko* took at least two years and involved elaborate feasts and ceremonies. Only a chief could command the resources and labor necessary to build one. When a Lauan high chief wanted a double canoe built he sent instructions and property to his carpenter on Kambara or another one of the timber islands in southern Lau. The carpenter had charge of the construction of the canoe, and he selected the timber and picked his assistants. A large trunk of greenheart was used for the large canoe, *mbau* for the small one. On the day of felling the tree a great feast called *mangitchi ni vaka mbale* was held in the bush. The series of feasts were *mangitchi ni vanua* (feasts of the land) provided as tribute to the chief by the people of the island. In construction the *sauthoko* resembled a very large *thamakathu* with a small canoe of the same type used instead of a float. The hull was shaped, turned, and hollowed as a sailing canoe is today, except that more labor was involved. The work was done with stone adzes. To hollow the hull first a heavy adz (*vula ono*) was used, then a short handled, thick adz (*i kotchi*), then a lighter adz (*valevatu*). The finishing was done with an adz which could be turned on the haft.

While hauling the hull to the shore the men sang rhythmically:

Unga e! Unga e!
E nggasi ki sa[illegible]na ko unga
Unga e! Unga e!

Land crab e! Land crab e!
Land crab crawls like an old man
Land crab e! Land crab e!

7: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1938
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the colonies of Tongans which sprang up in Lau had a marked effect upon the Lauan culture and race.[2]

The use of hardwood and the high development of carpentry account for the large number and range in size of the cutting-implements found in southern Lau.

Blades of stone and shell are no longer used as cutting-implements in Lau. They have been replaced by metal tools, hafted according to the old patterns, but many old implements are found in archaeological sites. Some are used today by the natives for *ivi* (*Inocarpus edulis* Forst.) nut-crackers or earth oven-stones.

Most of the stone cutting-implements are carefully made of selected, fine-grained basalt. They have been either pecked or chipped into shape, and all surfaces have been ground, and occasionally polished. A few specimens are composed of resistant sandstone, which is almost quartzite. All basalt implements found on the limestone islands such as Fulanga, Ongea, Wangava, and Namuka, have been imported from volcanic islands, probably chiefly from Komo, Lakemba, and Kambara (composed of limestone with a volcanic outcrop).

Stone Adzes[3]

The stone adzes have been classified according to cross-section into four types:— circular, elliptical, trapezoidal, and rectangular.

Circular Type

Fusiform adzes with circular cross-section are grouped as the circular type. (See Pl. A, 1 and fig. 1). There are a large number of adzes of this type in the collection. They narrow toward the pole, which is slightly flattened, and toward the edge, which is slightly curved and narrow, except when the adze has been worn down by sharpening of both

[2]For further information concerning the Tongans in Lau see my "Kulturgeschichte der Lauinseln (Fidschi gruppe)," *Archiv für Anthropologie* vol. 76, 1937.

[3]The terminology used in this study follows Buck, Emory, Skinner, and Stokes, "Terminology for ground stone cutting-implements in Polynesia," *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 39, no. 2, 1930.

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the bevel and the front sides of the edge. It is then straight and wide. The unmodified bevel is narrow transversely. It is slightly convex longitudinally. The surfaces of adzes of this type are convex, and angular margins are absent. Specimens of the circular type have been pecked and ground, and some have been polished. The butt-surfaces of some adzes have been slightly reduced by pecking to give security to the haft, but not sufficiently to form a tang.

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Variations. Adzes of the circular type vary greatly in size. A small adze (fig. 2) found with skeletal material in a cave on Ongea illustrates the small variety. An adze found in the same cave shows a clearly-developed shoulder (fig. 3). This is the only example of a definite shoulder in the collection.

Elliptical Type

Flat adzes with elliptical cross-section have been grouped as the elliptical type. (See Pl. A, 2 and fig. 4). They are the most numerous in the collection. Adzes of this type narrow markedly from the edge, which is wide and slightly curved, to the rounded or flattened pole. The surfaces are convex, the front surface being more curved than the back on most of the elliptical adzes. They are entirely ground and many are polished. Some have been resharpened by grinding on both sides of the bit. On one specimen the whole back surface of the butt and part of the front surface have been slightly reduced by pecking for greater security of the haft.

Variations. An adze found below the surface at the village site of Nggali, Mothe island (Pl. A, 3 and fig. 5) illustrates large, flat adzes of the elliptical type. Both back and front surfaces of this variety are flattened. It is intermediate between the elliptical and the rectangular types. A roughly finished adze from Mbutonikoro garden, Fulanga, (fig. 6) illustrates another variety of the elliptical type. This adze shows a tendency toward plane surfaces and angular margins. It is intermediate between the elliptical and the trapezoidal types. The back and side surfaces of the butt have been reduced by chipping to facilitate hafting.

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TRAPEZOIDAL TYPE

324 412 Long narrow adzes with symmetrical, trapezoidal cross-section form the trapezoidal type. (See Pl. A, 4 and fig. 7). This type has four definite surfaces which form angular margins. The front and back surfaces are roughly parallel, the back being wider than the front. On some adzes the back surface is slightly convex transversely. The front surface of this type narrows from edge to pole, thus it is triangular in form. The back surface is widest at the chin and narrows slightly towards the pole. The edge is sharp and straight. The bevel is slightly convex and forms a definite angle with the blade. Adzes of this type have been chipped and ground.

Variations. Adzes of the trapezoidal type vary in size. A small adze found at the mouth of a cave on Namuka measures 117 mm. long and 37 mm. at greatest width. An adze from Fulanga, with narrow, plane front surface, back deeply arched transversely, and flattened ovate cross-section, is a variation on the trapezoidal type, (See fig. 8). The exact form of this adze cannot be determined, because the front and bevel surfaces have been reground. The adze has been made roughly by the chipping-technique and the surfaces have been ground.

RECTANGULAR TYPE

Flat adzes with rectangular cross-section are classed as the rectangular type (See Pl. A, 5 and fig. 9). Front and back surfaces of these adzes are plane and of almost equal width, although the back is slightly wider. The side surfaces are slightly convex transversely. The edge is wide and straight. The bevel is plane with definite chin. The pole is flattened. Most adzes of this type are chipped, ground, and polished. One specimen shows evidence of pecking and subsequent grinding. It is unpolished.

Variations. An adze from Vatoa (Pl. A, 6 and fig. 10) illustrates the large thick variety of the rectangular type.

SHELL ADZES

321 412 There are several shell adzes in the collection. These adzes show a tendency toward angular margins and quadrangular form. One shell adze from Nasau village site,

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Namuka (Pl. A, 7 and fig. 11), resembles the rectangular type of stone adze, as does another shell adze found below the surface in Mbutonikoro garden, Fulanga (Pl. A, 8 and fig. 12).

Gouges

The collection contains two gouges. Both are fusiform with circular cross-section, similar in form and technique to adzes of the circular type. The bevel is narrow and concave transversely. The edge is curved. Both specimens are pecked and ground. The gouge illustrated in Plate A, 9 was found below the surface in Mbutonikoro garden, Fulanga. The other gouge was found on the surface at Velavela, Wangava. It is an unusally long and narrow implement. It measures 335 mm. long and 49 mm. at greatest width. It is composed of basalt and weighs 50 ozs.

Comparisons

The type of cutting-implements which have been described fall clearly into two groups; those with curved cross-section and convex surfaces and those with quadrangular cross-section and a tendency toward flat surfaces and angular margins. For the sake of classification I have called the first group Fijian and the second western-Polynesian. The Fijian group includes the circular and elliptical types, and the western-Polynesian includes the trapezoidal and rectangular types. About two-thirds of the 44 specimens from Lau which were examined fall into the Fijian group, while the remaining third may be classed as western-Polynesian.

Adzes similar to the circular and elliptical types are found in the Bishop Museum collection from Fiji proper and from the Marianas islands. Adzes of the rectangular type also occur in the Marianas collection.[4] Adzes of the elliptical type are common in Melanesia.

Adzes of the quadrangular or western-Polynesian type are found in the Bishop Museum collection from Tonga,

[4]See my "Archaeology of the Marianas islands," *Bishop Museum Bul.* 100, Honolulu, 1932, Plate 6 A (type 1, circular), 6 C (type 2, elliptical), 6 D (type 3, rectangular).

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Samoa,[5] Rotuma, Tokelau,[6] Futuna,[7] and Uvea,[8] but are absent in the small collection from Fiji proper.

Hence besides the specialization in carpentry, the position of the Lau islands on the border between Polynesia and Melanesia adds interest to a study of the cutting-implements. This marginal position is clearly reflected in the local types of adzes.

[5]See Peter Buck, "Samoan Material Culture," *Bishop Museum Bul.* 75, Honolulu, 1930, Plate 36 C (type 3, rectangular); Plate 37 B and figure 196 (type 6, triangular).

[6]Gordon Macgregor, "Ethnology of Tokelau," *Bishop Museum Bul.* 146, figure 24, 1937.

[7]Edwin G. Burrows, "Ethnology of Futuna," *Bishop Museum Bul.* 138, Plate 5, A and C, 1936.

[8]Edwin G. Burrows, "Ethnology of Uvea," *Bishop Museum Bul.* 145, figure 3, 1937.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate A. Adzes from the Lau islands.

1. Adze (C7283) circular type, found in a cave with skeletal material, Ongea island; composed of basalt; blade ground, butt pecked; fusiform narrows toward flattened, pecked poll, and toward slightly curved, narrow edge: back view showing bevel. Weight 24 ozs. 324 412
2. Adze (C7462) elliptical type, found on the surface, Embalailai garden near Muanaira, Fulanga; composed of basalt, ground and polished; truncate triangular form: back view showing flattened surface with plane bevel. Weight 9 ozs.
3. Adze (C7443) elliptical type, flat, found 5 centimeters below the surface at Nggali village site, Mothe; composed of basalt, ground: back view showing flattened surface similar in form to front. Weight 26 ozs.
4. Adze (C7288) trapezoidal type, from Vatoa, composed of basalt, quadrilateral with well defined angles: a, front polished, slightly convex longitudinally, narrowing from edge to flattened poll; b, back chipped and polished, is flat and wider than front. Weight 7 ozs.
5. Adze (C7293) rectangular type from Ongea, composed of basalt, chipped, ground and polished: a, front slightly convex longitudinally, slightly narrower than back; b, back flat. Weight 6 ozs.
6. Adze (C7289) rectangular type large, thick, from Vatoa; composed of basalt, pecked and slightly ground: back view showing plane surface. Weight 81 ozs.
7. Adze (C7433) of shell, from Nasau village site, Namuka; composed of tridacna, ground: a, front and b, back convex transversely and longitudinally, with edges narrowing toward flattened poll. Weight 4 ozs. 321 412
8. Adze (C7456) of shell, found 18 centimeters below the surface in Mbutonikoro garden, Fulanga; composed of tridacna, ground: a, front less convex than b, back. Weigth 1 oz.
9. Gouge (C7454) resembling adzes of the circular type, found 18 centimeters below the surface at Mbutonikoro, Fulanga; composed of basalt pecked and ground, fusiform with convex surfaces, narrow edge, and flattened poll; back view showing concave bevel, length 140 millimetres; depth 34 millimetres; cross section circular. Weight 10 ozs. 324 412

Figures (one-third actual size) by Edward Y. Hosaka.

Fig. 1—Adze (C7283) circular type: a, front; b, back; c, side showing similarity of profiles; d, cross-section circular, flattening toward edge.

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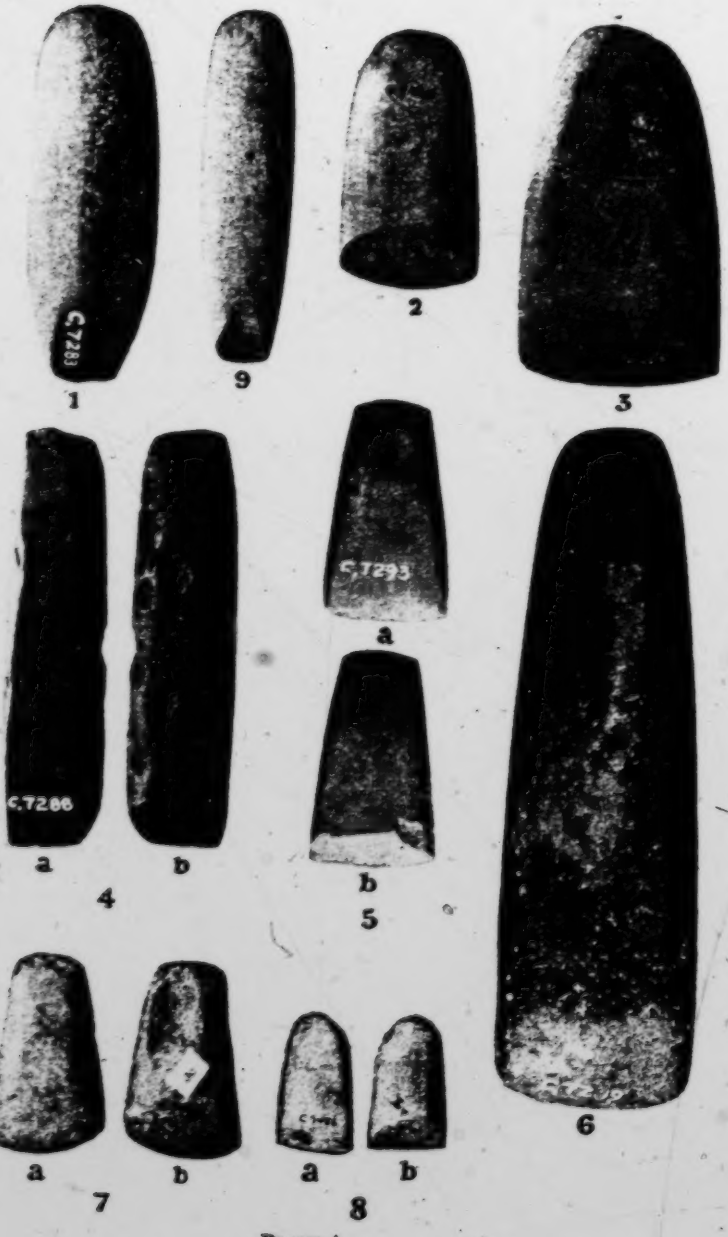

PLATE A.

[facing p. 104]

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Fig. 2—Adze (C7286) circular type, small: a, front, well ground and polished, pecked above edge and at poll, front edge ground from resharpening: b, back, ground and polished, flattened; c, side shows edge almost equibeveled from resharpening; d, cross-section subcircular.

Fig. 3—Adze (C7287) circular type: a, front slopes from shoulder to edge and to poll; b, back flattened; c, side showing definite shoulder and chin; d, cross-section subcircular.

Fig. 4—Adze (C7462) elliptical type, truncate triangular form: a, front convex transversely and longitudinally with wide curved edge; b, back flattened with plane bevel; c, side convex; d, cross-section roughly elliptical.

Fig. 5—Adze (C7443) elliptical type, flat: a, front; b, back flattened and similar in form; c, sides also flattened with tendency toward angular margins; d, cross-section elliptical with tendency toward rectangular form.

Fig. 6—Adze (C7478) elliptical type, large: a, front, surface ground, slightly convex transversely; b, back blade ground, butt reduced by chipping, surface flattened transversely; c, side surface chipped, reduced toward poll; d, cross-section irregularly elliptical showing slight tendency toward angular margins.

Fig. 7—Adze (C7288) trapezoidal type, quadrilateral with well defined angles: a, front polished, slightly convex longitudinally, narrowing from edge to flattened poll; b, back chipped and polished, is flat and wider than front; c, side chipped and polished with definite chin; d, section symmetrically trapezoidal with front and back surfaces roughly parallel.

Fig. 8—Adze (B7925) trapezoidal variation: a, front narrow plane surface which has been reground and polished; b, back convex transversely, polished; c, side showing definite chin and reground bevel; d, cross-section flattened ovate.

Fig. 9—Adze (C7293) rectangular type, a, front slightly convex longitudinally, slightly narrower than back; b, back flat; c, side flattened, definite chin; d, cross-section rectangular.

Fig. 10—Adze (C7289) rectangular type, large: a, front plane; b, back plane; c, sides slightly convex; b, cross-section subrectangular.

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Fig. 11—Adze (C7433) shell: a, front and b, back convex transversely and longitudinally, wide edge narrowing toward flattened poll; c, side showing thin profile; d, cross-section irregularly elliptical with tendency toward angular margins.

Fig. 12—Adze (C7456) shell: a, front less convex than b, back; c. sides; d, cross-section irregularly elliptical with tendency toward angular margins.

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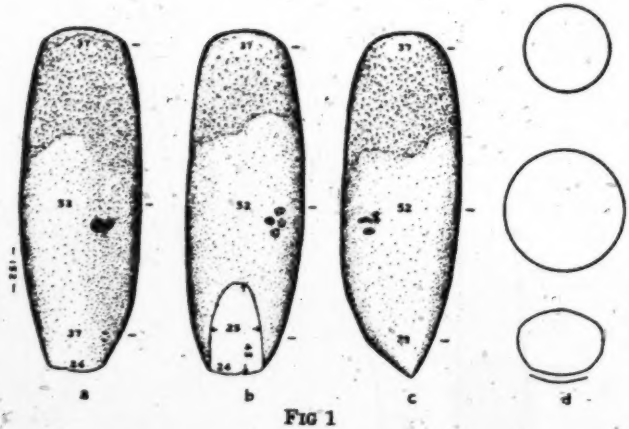

FIG 1

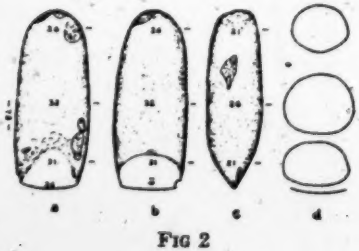

FIG 2

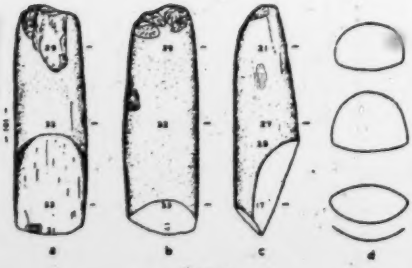

FIG 3

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FIG 4

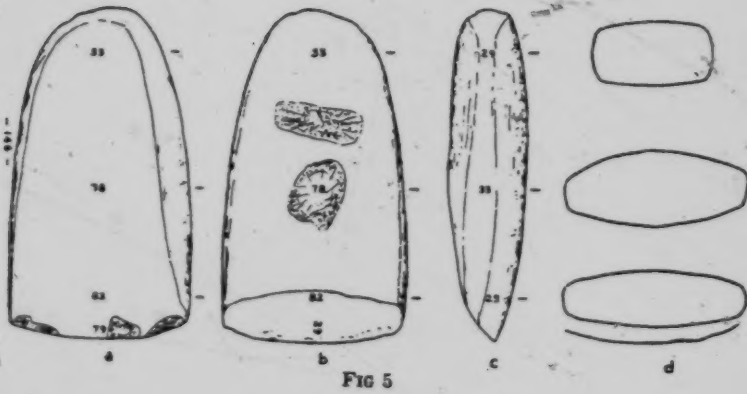

FIG 5

FIG 6

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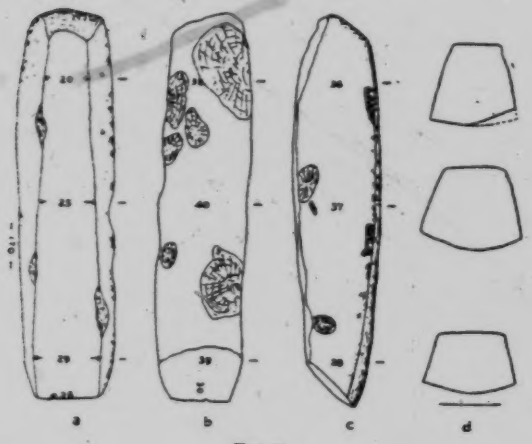

FIG 7

FIG 8

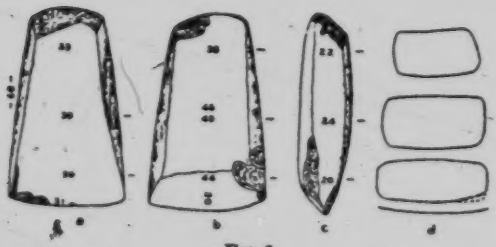

FIG 9

7: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1938
OQ6 Lau OQ6

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412

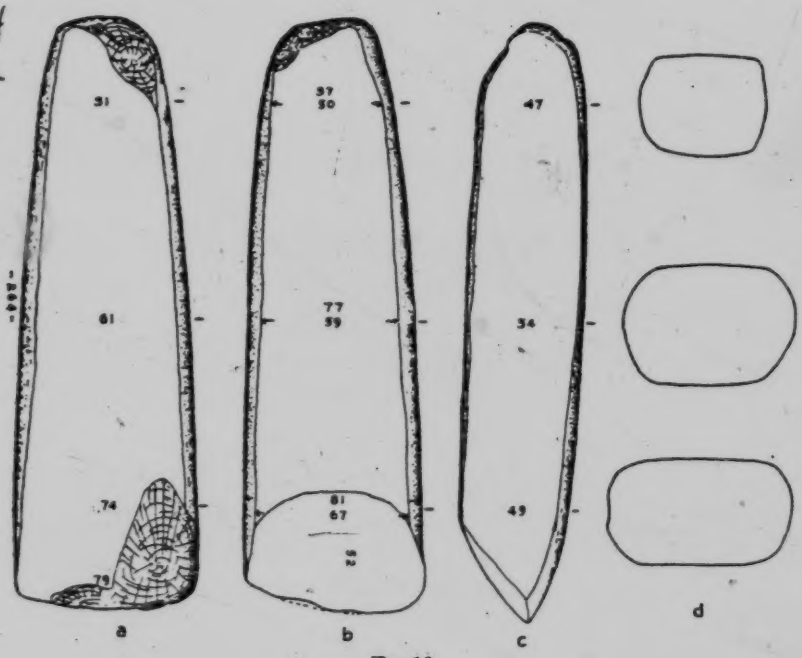

FIG 10

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FIG 11

FIG 12

[pp. 109 - end, not processed]

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date)1918
OQ6 Lau OQ6

[p.106 is blank]

SOME LEGENDS OF THE EXPLORING ISLES.

I WAS examining a curious stone axe-head in the house of Adi Letila, a very old widow of chiefly rank, at Loma Loma town, when she looked up at me from the woven grass mats on which she was seated, and said, with that innate courtesy which no amount of "civilization" has yet dispelled from the Lau islanders, "It is yours, sir, if you desire to have so small a thing." Knowing that she would only feel hurt by refusal I accepted the gift—mentally resolving to send her some small present in return; and then sat down to have a chat with her. And so we talked of the days of old—the days when this axe-head had been used by her ancestors, or, perhaps, even her father—for so recent is the Stone Age in this race of cultured people among whom the mere absence of iron did not necessarily denote barbarism.

I asked her if she thought it was a good implement to hew out a canoe with, and she replied, with a smile on her still handsome old face, "No, sir;

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date) 1918
OQ6 Lau OQ6

the iron tools that you white chiefs brought to Fiji far surpass our ancient axes in hardness, though that stone you hold is indeed a hard one, almost hard enough to hurt the children of Rasikilau." And then she told me the story of Rasikilau the Mighty, and from that went on to tales of the other gods of the Exploring Isles[1] till the lengthening shadows at the house-door made me realize with a start how long I had spent listening to these legends, told by the lips of the last of the old people who still held personal belief in them.

"In the days before the first foreign ship came to Lau," she began, lighting a *suluka*[2] with a small fire-brand, "there lived on Cikobia Island over yonder a god called Rasikilau, whose movements shook the hills when he walked, and whose head reached the tops of the highest palm-trees. Even now, when the men of Cikobia lie out on the beach on hot nights, they can sometimes feel the earth tremble, and they know that Rasikilau is moving near them.

"Now, Rasikilau mated with a goddess, a princess beautiful to see, who came sailing in a canoe from far away to the north,[3] so far that no man has ever known the name of that land;

[1] Vanua Balavu and a few adjacent islets of northern Lau.
[2] Native cheroot.
[3] Probably part of the legend that the Cikobia of Lau people are *tauvu*, or of common ancestry, with the people of Cikobia i Ra, an island to the north of Fiji.